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# STATISTICAL PRIMER

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## A DIRECTORY OF HEALTH DATA PUBLISHED BY THE STATE CENTER FOR HEALTH STATISTICS

by

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### INTRODUCTION

The State Center for Health Statistics collects and publishes data on a variety of health-related subjects in several different formats. This primer is to serve as a reference for finding the specific data needed in SCHS publications.

Before proceeding with this primer, the matched and unmatched infant death files need to be defined. The matched file is a file in which the births and infant deaths for a specified period have been paired. This file allows for matching birth and death characteristics. Also, the deaths need not have occurred in the birth year, but rather during the first year after the birth. For example, if a child born in December 1988 dies in February of 1989, this death is counted as a postneonatal death in 1989 in the unmatched file. The matched file, however, will show this as a postneonatal death for 1988, because the matched file reflects deaths to children born in the calendar year 1988.

The numbers and rates in the *Birth and Infant Mortality Statistics* volumes are from the matched file. Unless specified, other publications from SCHS use data from the unmatched files.

Two other terms which are often misunderstood are occurrence and residence. Using births as an example, occurrence births are events which happen in an area (state, region, county, city, etc.), regardless of the residence of the mother. Resident births are events that happen to mothers living in an area, regardless of where the birth takes place. For instance, a mother from Hyde County goes into labor in Charlotte and has the baby at Presbyterian Hospital. Since this birth is to a woman who lives in Hyde County, the birth is considered a Hyde County resident birth. The file on occurrences will show this as a Mecklenburg County birth since the event happened at a Mecklenburg County hospital. Unless specifically noted as occurrence births, all birth information issued from the State Center for Health Statistics is resident data. This is because most people are interested in events involving persons who live in an area, rather than those events that happen in an area.